

Abroad Report Breda

I attended Avans University of Applied Sciences in Breda for two semesters from August 2023 to June 2024. When doing an exchange semester at the Avans University of Applied Sciences one can choose one of a range of programmes from their curriculum to participate in. These are listed on their website ([Avans University of Applied Sciences](https://www.avans.nl)), and are generally recognised for 30 ects. In addition, Avans also offers voluntary language courses. An important note is that Avans has different facilities across Breda, Tilburg and den Bosch one should have this in mind when applying for courses and housing.

When applying to Breda you have to apply to one of their exchange programmes whilst also concluding your learning agreement. If you have any questions along the process, their International Office is quite helpful in guiding you through the process (internationaloffice@avans.nl).

It is hard to find accommodation in general in Breda or even neighbouring cities like Tilburg. It is possible to obtain accommodation through the university, however, the number is limited, and you will have to apply for it quite early. If requested, the university will put you in touch with one of several providers of student accommodation, which will send out offers for the upcoming semester on a fixed date. Please make sure to reply to these offers as soon as possible, as places are allocated on a first-come, first-serve basis. As such I would recommend starting to look for accommodation already whilst you are in the process of applying.

Avans will provide you with the relevant information about the registration process with the city of Breda, which is sufficient for EU students. Non-EU students will have to go through a different process, Avans will inform them about that process as well.

One thing that you should definitely consider during your stay is to rent a bike. It is probably the most convenient way of getting around and the university has a big space to park your bike, so I would recommend renting one. Keep in mind there is no semester ticket as common for many German universities. Public transport is available both within the city and between major cities; bus tickets can be purchased with bank cards on the buses themselves, or there is a so-called OV card for frequent users. More information can be found from the following website. There is a close rail network to neighbouring cities, including to transport hubs such as Amsterdam or Brussels.

During my time at Avans I completed two minor programmes, International Finance and International Project Management and Stakeholder Engagement. All of the courses, including classwork, projects and interaction with professors and students are entirely and comfortably held in English. In general living and studying in the Netherlands is very easy given even a moderate command of English, as it is spoken and understood everywhere.

I did enjoy International Finance as most courses built on previous courses in that area. It was mainly classroom-based but had a less packed schedule than some other courses, giving us more time to travel and explore the Netherlands.

During the second semester I followed International Project Management and Stakeholder Engagement, which included participation in the Avans Innovative Studio. These courses had limited classroom-based lectures but featured more project-based time working for clients to find solutions to a specific problem they had. What they both have in common, and to my understanding all exchange programmes have, is that none of the assessments are exam-based. I had to write reports, hold presentations and work on a project solution for clients. It was a change to what I was used to, but it worked well overall.

During both courses there was at least as many international as Dutch students. The project groups were always mixed as the professors who put them together wanted them to include various nationalities.

An additional thing of note is that Avans does not really have a canteen but rather a few cafeterias. The Dutch don't generally have big or warm lunches and as such there is little "lunch" on offer. The best you can find is either a panini or a slice of pizza so you will have to bring your own lunch if you want something more substantial.

Breda itself is a nice student town with lots of international students from Europe and further abroad. It is a fairly lively city with various bars, cafes and other things that you can do in your spare time. As mentioned above we had time to travel around the Netherlands in the first semester. I would highly recommend visiting the different cities as they have a lot to offer and the train system in the Netherlands is quite decent. As for the general living costs, I found them to be relatively comparable to living in Germany.

You might also want to look into the Bress sports scenter. For a subscription you can sign up to play a number of sports as well as going to the gym. You can find more information on Bress and other topics of interest for students at the introduction day, which also offers a tour of the city. I would highly recommend going as it proved to be very useful for myself.

In practical terms it takes about four hours to get to Breda by car via Brussels. It takes between six and a half and seven hours to get to Breda by train via Luxembourg and Brussels. Alternatively, you could also fly to either Amsterdam or Eindhoven and take the train from there.